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STATE OF MISSOURI

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

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For Release

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Winter Awareness Day Set for Wednesday, Nov. 18 ***Missouri's Recent Winter Storms Have Been Costly***

Missouri has experienced three severe winter storms since January 2008 that have knocked out power to hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses and caused millions of dollars in damage to private property. At the height of the power outages following the January 26-28, 2009 ice storm, 135,000 customers were without electricity. Eight people died as a result of the storm that left a layer of ice more than 2 inches thick in some parts of southern Missouri.

According to the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, there were 26 cold-weather related deaths during the winter of 2008-09 and 23 deaths during the winter of 2007-08. The National Weather Service, the State Emergency Management Agency and your local Emergency Management Agency have set Wednesday, November 18, 2009, as Winter Awareness Day.

"The winter awareness campaign encourages Missourians to prepare for and protect themselves during a snow or ice storm. Cold weather puts a strain on your heart. In the event of snow fall, citizens are urged to be careful when shoveling snow, pushing a car out of a snow bank and to generally avoid overexertion in the winter," said SEMA Director Paul Parmenter.

Important terms the National Weather Service uses when forecasting are "Winter Storm Watch" and "Winter Storm Warning."

- **Winter Storm Watch** indicates that severe winter weather may affect your area within 12-48 hours.
- **Winter Storm Warning** indicates severe winter weather is in the area or expected immediately and can be life threatening.
- **Ice Storm Warning** is issued for ice accumulations of a quarter-inch or more.

Missourians can prepare for winter by:

- **Creating a family emergency plan** and creating an emergency kit with additional water and food that can be prepared without cooking in case of a power outage.
- **Securing an alternate fuel source** such as firewood or a generator. Make sure your fireplace functions properly. If you have a generator, make sure you have fuel, your generator functions properly. Only operate the generator outdoors.
- **Creating a winter car kit** in the trunk of the car. This includes a blanket, spare radio with batteries, snacks or energy-type food, jumper cables, flares, shovel, sand or shingles to give tires traction.

More information can be found at the following websites:

SEMA: <http://sema.dps.mo.gov/semapage.htm>. Click on the 2009 Winter Awareness link.

Missouri's Ready in 3 program: http://www.dhss.mo.gov/Ready_in_3

Missouri Dept. of Transportation's Road Conditions: <http://www.modot.mo.gov/>

National Weather Service - St. Louis Winter Campaign: <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/lx/?n=winterday>

NWS's Winter Deceptive Killer Brochure: <http://www.weather.gov/os/brochures/winterstorm.pdf>

FEMA's Winter Awareness Campaign: <http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/winter.shtm>